

**HPOG Promising Practices: Innovative Use of Technology**  
**Bergen Community College, Northern New Jersey Health Professions Consortium (NNJHPC)**

Bergen Community College is the lead member of the Northern New Jersey Health Professions Consortium (NNJHPC), a group of 10 county community colleges working to train TANF and other low-income participants in healthcare occupations. The consortium's large geographic area makes it difficult for the 10 site coordinators to coordinate in person and also makes it challenging to disseminate important information to partners and students. NNJHPC has leveraged technology to address these issues, creating a public consortium website and an internal LinkedIn group.

The NNJHPC website ([www.nnjhp.com](http://www.nnjhp.com)), built using Microsoft's Sharepoint platform, allows the consortium to communicate with partners, employers, and current students. Information available includes health professions course descriptions, links to industry associations and career exploration sites, links to each county's One-Stop Career Center and Workforce Investment Board, and job opportunity listings from the consortium's employer partners. The site also offers subscription capabilities through Constant Contact, ensuring that consortium stakeholders receive the latest news and information. The website is fast becoming a means to provide partners with immediate access to relevant materials and updates.

For its internal communication, NNJHPC has established a forum Group through LinkedIn. LinkedIn Groups allow members to create or comment on discussions posts, providing a means for knowledge sharing and group problem solving. Membership in this Group is limited to grant leadership and the individual leaders at each of the 10 member colleges. The Group is restricted, or private, so members feel free to openly communicate with their peers. Consortium director Justin Doheny reports that members have thus far used the Group to request assistance and ideas from other Consortium leaders, and that they view it as a helpful addition to the various communication channels available within the NNJHPC.

For other HPOG grantees considering the use of Internet tools for communication or information sharing, Mr. Doheny recommends choosing a platform that's easy to design and easy to use. He points to the LinkedIn platform as an example of highly accessible software. Indeed, many of the site coordinators already had an account prior to the creation of the LinkedIn group. Mr. Doheny also encourages other grantees to make their Internet tools and sites look professional and suggests that grantees use the talents of their organization's Web designer, if possible. A site that is easily updated is also crucial, as effective information sharing requires frequent posts and uploads. To facilitate and encourage internal communication, Mr. Doheny suggests that project directors consider restricting access to Internet sites or groups by making them private.